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SIX SHARPS, ONE FLAT

BY

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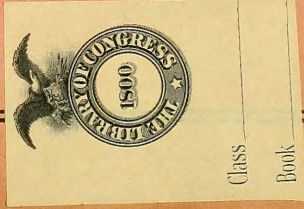
A One Scene, Four Act Drama

Employing Fifteen People and Setting Forth the Experiences of Six Sharp Girls in One Small Flat

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Canton, Illinois
1907

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SIX SHARPS, ONE FLAT

Cast of Characters

Mabel Maitland, who reads and impersonates.

Dorothy Dean, who sings.

Polly Perkins, who is a pianist.

Joyce Jocelyn, who is an artist.

Margaret Merrill, who is a stenographer.

Katherine Kimberlin, who writes stories.

Mrs. Scroggs, who wants her daughter "finished."

Clarissy Eldory Scroggs, the daughter to be "finished."

Mr. Fitz, a book agent.

Dennis, the janitor of the flat.

Rodney Morris, who calls on Miss Perkins under difficulties.

Mrs. Harding, another flat dweller.

Robert Dare, Mrs. Harding's brother.

Fred Albright, just returned from Europe.

Cholly Chumleigh, who is not one sharp.

Stage Directions

The room should be arranged as six girls would be likely to have it, made attractive by cushions, college banners, shirt waist boxes and the like. There should be three entrances—one presumably to the bedroom, one to the kitchen and one outside entrance. There must be a piano and a music cabinet and if desired an easel, with artist's materials, at which Joyce may be sitting working at the opening of Act II, and she might sit there while the book agent is talking until she gets out to avoid hearing him "explain."

When the curtain rises in the first act the table must be very nearly set—just a few things to add—the sugar bowl, cream pitcher, toast and coffee. Make the breakfast as realistic as possible. Have real toast and coffee, and eat and drink. After the breakfast clear the table in the regulation way, have the rattle of washing dishes in the kitchen, then put on fancy table cover and put books and magazines on it. Make it all realistic as possible.

Much depends upon having the audience in the secret that Rodney Morris is Polly's real, accepted lover and not the expected caller whom she did not want to see. It is expected that the audience will comprehend it from Rodney Morris' speech. "And we were to have been married. Can it be that she has become interested in some one else and has been deceiving me all this time?" etc. This speech wants to be pronounced very clearly and brought out well. Then if there are printed programs, put it on the program that Morris is the real accepted lover for the interest of the play lies in this knowledge and that they miss each other at every turn.

The selections in songs and elocution for the ones taking Dot's and Mab's parts will of course be those chosen by the persons taking the parts and the suggestions given may be followed or not. But the thought is that a serious and a humorous reading will lend variety. As to the songs, the suggestion that they be by some great composer is made because a master musician

would be likely to choose those for Dot to sing, and there can be a variety by making the character of the selections different—one sacred and the other not sacred—but, of course, the one taking the part must sing what she can sing well and the elocutionist must read what she can read well.

Acts I, II and III take place the same day; Act I, in the morning, Act II, from about 11 o'clock on, through the afternoon and Act III in the evening of the same day.

Act IV takes place two days later, in the afternoon. That is, two days elapse between Act III and Act IV.

The Play

Curtain rises, showing living room with table partly laid for breakfast. Polly is discovered beating vigorously on a pie pan.

Polly—I think this'll rouse those lazy girls. Kit, Joyce, Marno, Mab, Dot, come my beauties, hustle up.

Mab—[From within] Stop that everlasting racket.

Marno—[Sleepily] Well I should say! His highness, the janitor, will be along next. I was dreaming just now, that he was giving one of his gentle raps and "less noise please".

Joyce—All the flatters will be saying things, at having their slumbers disturbed. [Polly still drums at intervals.]

Dot—But they'll not be flattering.

Polly—[Continuing preparations for breakfast] Well, if our cupboard isn't like Mother Hubbard's! Not an earthly thing for breakfast, but a few slices of dry bread for toast, and our last coffee in the pot. We'll have to hold a council of war, or something. [Raising voice] Come girls.

Dot—[From within] Has some one an extra shoe string? I positively can't tie another knot in this one.

Marno—[From within] Yes, here's one, but remember my dear, you are already in my debt two hairpins, three long black pins, five white headed pins, and two rows and a half of common pins.

Dot—A sharp proposition I'm up against. I'll pay you in flats when my ship comes in.

Marno—Thanks, but I've had about all the flats in mine, I care for.

Polly—Do hurry girls, or the toast will be stone cold.

Joyce—[From within] Coming Polly Perkins, coming.

Mab—I'd be coming too, if somebody hadn't confiscated my kimona.

Joyce—[Entering from bedroom, says from doorway] You'll find it on the chair in there, where I put it last night, after we used it for a stand cover. It makes a dandy, if you put books, and "brickerty brack" on to hide the arm holes. [Turning to Polly] Can't I help you Polly? I am willing to lend my valuable services, even if it is your week.

Polly—Your offer comes too late. Every thing is ready, but the girls. [In turning stubs her toe] Bother flats, any way! They are the most unhandy boxes. Have to go out doors to turn around. "A place for every thing, and everything in its place," is a flat motto. It's a have-to case. I feel sometimes that I must get out, and try my wings, and breathe.

Joyce—You'd be sure to fall flat. There is no escaping the flat, my dear. [Joyce puts chairs to table.]

Polly—[Continues] The coffee pot reposes under the couch when not in action. [Brings sugar bowl and cream pitcher from music cabinet] Have to keep these in here at night, and on the folding bed in the day time. A nice arrangement! Tho' a music cabinet doesn't make a half bad china closet. [Looks in sugar bowl] Just about a spoonful apiece. That won't suit Queen Mab worth a cent.

Marno—[Enters from bedroom] What have you for breakfast Polly? Some thing real good?

Polly—You never sat down to such a repast, as the one that awaits you this morning. [Goes off and brings coffee pot and plate of toast and puts on the table.]

Mab—[Entering] What is it Polly? Don't be mysterious before breakfast. It isn't good for the digestion.

Kit—[Entering] Oh, Polly! Have we really something good?

Polly—Yes—good appetites, but that's about all. Behold! Our last morsel is before you, so let's fall to.

Joyce—Yes, let's gather round the festive board. [All gather round the table.]

Kit—Where's Dottie Dimple? Late as usual. [Enter Dot.]
Dot—Better late than never. Am I in time to serve the first course?
Polly—Do you mean, in other words, that of course you will be served first? I'm not so sure about that. Remember the "early bird."
Dot—Remember also what the worm got, for getting up so early.
Kit—I feel a little languid this morning. I believe I'll have some breakfast food and cream.
Dot—Cream! Wouldn't that jar you?
Mab—Never mind Dot, she's not crazy.
Kit—[Ignoring interruption] What have you in the breakfast food line?
Polly—I only prepared a few. I have rolled wheat, cracked oats, shredded rice, snow flakes, flaky flakes, puffed corn, cream of rye, and wheat kinks.
Kit—[Interrupting] Thank you, I'll take some.
Mab—Isn't this porter-house broiled to a turn?
Marno—It'd give me a turn to see some.
Joyce—Pardon me Polly, but don't you think the quail a trifle rare?
Dot—I think it's out of sight.
Polly—Jokes aside girls, matters are becoming serious. I'm getting discouraged.
Joyce—Why Pollywog, since when have you taken to croaking?
Kit—Well, I don't blame her, when we don't know where our next meal is coming from. I believe we'd better give up and go home.
Mab—Go home, and be a laughing stock, and have everybody say "I told you so". Never!
Joyce—Why Polly dear, what has come over the spirit of your dreams? It isn't often you look through blue glasses.
Marno—Oh, I think I can explain. "Accordin' to my surmization" as uncle Tim would say, Polly is in the dumps, because a certain letter which comes so regularly every week has not yet put in an appearance.
Kit—My worst fears are realized. She has an aggravated case of ingrowing affection.
Dot—Well, it's either that, or indigestion.
Polly—[Laughing] You mean old things! It's indigestion, caused from overeating. But it seems to me it's time for some one to be blue, when we are sans food, sans money, sans prospects, sans everything.
Joyce—[Patting Polly on shoulder] Cheer up, cheer up my Polly. We are not without prospects. Just wait till Monsieur Baptisti finds a purchaser for my bit of still life, which he exclaims over, and declares displays "ze real feeling".
Kit—Yes, and just wait till my last story has been accepted. You know it hasn't been returned, and I sent plenty of stamps, if it did take nearly my last penny.
Dot—Listen, girls, our rent is not due for three days, and this is the day my box comes from home, and I feel it in my bones, that something will happen before this time tomorrow.
Mab—Why something's bound to turn up, and that soon.
Polly—I ought to be ashamed to be croaking, when you all are so brave, and I promise you I'm done with it. [Jumps up from table] Heigho! we'll be on the top wave of prosperity yet. [Goes to the piano and plays some rolling song which Dot sings, while the others begin clearing table, joining in the song from time to time. Later the rattle of washing dishes may be heard in the kitchen, when the table is cleared and a table cover is put on.]
Marno—[Coming from bedroom dressed for street, after song is finished] Well, I must be getting down town to apply for that position as typewriter. If I'm late, Mr. Winter may think I'm not the type of writer he wants.
Polly—[Whirling on stool] Good luck to you my lady.
Dot—Come back with good news.
Mab—Tell him for speed and accuracy you're a hummer.
Marno—'Twill be better to let him find that out for himself. Well, so long.
Joyce—[While girls arrange room] If that old curmudgeon doesn't give her the place, he ought to be—well I'll not say what.
Mab—May as well say it Joyce. Don't mind us, but relieve your mind, if your words are heated.
[Knock is heard, and all leave room but Dot, who opens door and admits Mrs. Scroggs and daughter Clarissy Eldory.]
Mrs. Scroggs—Is this where Miss Perkins stops?
Dot—Yes, this is her home, won't you 'be seated? I'll call her. [Goes to door.] Polly! [Enter Polly] This is Miss Perkins.
Mrs. S.—My name is Scroggs. We used to live in Scroggsville, but wa

come to the city a spell back. Scroggsville was named after Josiah's [that's my man] pa, old 'Squire Scroggs. This is my daughter, Clarissy Eldory. We read what you put in the paper, and her pa thought I'd better come and see if you could learn Clarissy Eldory any more. She plays beautiful now, and her teacher at home couldn't learn her no more, but we thought there might be some body in the city that could learn her some new pieces. She has an awful gift for music. Why before she was twelve years old she could pick out hymns with one hand on the organ. So Josiah and me thought we hadn't orter hinder her, but ort to do all we could to let her show off her talent. She takes after my side, if I do say it what shouldn't, for I had a great uncle that played the accordion beautiful, and land sakes! we had no end of school marm's in our family, and one legislature. Clarissy Eldory, play some of the pieces I had you bring along, and show Miss Perkins what you can do.

Polly—Yes, I'd like very much to hear her play.

Mrs. S.—[While the child gets music ready, the mother continues] Ain't she pretty? She looks just like me when I was her age. I was called the best lookin' girl in Scroggsville, and how I ever took up with Josiah Scroggs beats my time, for he had no good looks to speak of, but his father was 'Squire Scroggs, and he had money, so I knowed I would never have to take in washin', and I think every girl ort to have an eye to business, when she's lookin' for a man. [By this time the child is ready to play.] Go on now Clarissy Eldory. [While child plays execrably, mother looks at her with face full of pride.] Now play that piece your pa likes so well. I can't just remember the name, but it goes like this. [Mrs. S. hums some old fashioned waltz and keeps time with hands and feet.]

Mrs. S.—[When child has finished, and turns from piano with self-satisfied air.] Now Miss, what do you think of that? Hain't she an air though? They do say there was some dreadful way up folks in the Scroggs family—lords or something, but I never see any of 'em, for that was long before my time.

Clarissy—Oh, naw, you make me tired.

Polly—Mrs. Scroggs, if I give you daughter lessons, I will have—

Mrs. S.—[Interrupting.] Oh, yes, I understand. You needn't worry about the pay none, you'll get that all right—money's no object with me. It may seem like throwin' it away, when of course Clarissy Eldory'll marry, but she's all we've got, and Josiah and me thought we wouldn't mind the waste. Do you know, there's one feller's wanted her a'ready, and her only fifteen. But me an' her pa made up our minds we'd have her wait till she's turned seventeen any way, for we don't believe in girls marryin' young.

Polly—Mrs. Scroggs, if you will allow me, I want to say that if I give, your daughter lessons, she will have to begin at the beginning. Her fingerin' is very bad, she knows nothing of phrasing, and she hasn't the least idea of time. Her position is bad, her wrists are stiff, and seemingly she has no sense of rhythm.

Mrs. S.—[In a loud tone.] No sense! My daughter no sense; I'd have you know she has more sense than you ever had. Do you know you are talkin' about 'Squire Scroggs's granddaught'r? I was almost sartin when I looked at you that you didn't know much. I'd have you know my daughter has took lessons of teachers enough sight better than you be. She has took of her aunt Mandy Simms, who has played the organ in our church for twenty years. Then there's Miss Plunkett, who come to our town every two weeks, and she went to an observatory in Boston for three months. I'm thinkin' the trouble with you is, you don't know nothin' about a finish yourself. Begin at the beginnin' indeed! Come Clarissy Eldory, we'll see if we can find somebody what knows what a finish means.

[As Mrs. S. and daughter flounce out of the room, Polly looks after them in bewilderment, and with a deep sigh sinks into a chair. The other girls come in groaning.]

Joyce—Another bright prospect vanished.

Dot—Yes, Clarissy Eldory was a bright prospect indeed.

Kit—You couldn't even give her a finish, Polly.

Polly—Well, the two of them pretty nearly finished me.

Mab—[Shaking her head.] Polly, Polly, honest Polly.

Polly—Too bad to lose a chance, when in such dire need, but what could I do? That girl was simply impossible. I just had to tell the truth. But I must be getting down to the city. [Leaves room.]

Kit—Did you ever hear such playin' in all your life?

Dot—She had an awful gift for music for a fact. Execution—slaughter—murder aren't in it.



Kit—And that mother, with her hair done up almost tight enough to play a tune, do you think she took breath the whole time she was here? I don't believe she stopped talking long enough.

Polly—[Entering dressed for street.] Girls I'm expecting a caller today. A young man, and you must help me out.

Joyce—We can do that all right. We'll look our swellest, and entertain him—

Polly—[Interrupting.] That's just what I don't want you to do.

Kit—Huh! want him all yourself, do you? That's cool, I must say.

Polly—Mercy—no, that's the very thing I don't want.

Dot—Will the lady please explain? First you're off a'gin, then you're on a'gin.

Polly—Give me a chance, and I will. I've had a letter and he wants to call on me, when in town today, and I don't want to see him.

Joyce—Why this reckless waste of admirers, pray tell? Why don't you want to see him?

Polly—Well, just because I don't. We've known each other all our lives, and our families are the best of friends, so I hate to turn him down completely.

Mab—Oh, I catch on. Prince Persistent, and the maid of the marble heart.

Joyce—But you know, there's another prince who is the favored one—but that's another story.

Dot—It's he, whose letter has not appeared this week. See?

Joyce—Twas ever thus. The wrong one is under our feet, or at our feet, while the right one—well, he keeps himself at magnificent distances.

Kit—Never mind, the Prince Charming will come along yet.

Mab—Run along Polly, we'll take care of your caller all right. We'll give him the icy mit. He'll think he's struck a cold storage plant.

Polly—Trust you for that. You may say I've gone to the city, and you don't know when I'll be back. [Opens door.] Why, here's the mail, and girls.

[Glances at letters.] Nothing for me though. [Hands mail to Joyce.]

Kit—Oh Joyce, is there a letter for me? I surely ought to get one today. Joyce—Queen Mab, here's a missive for you, and—yes Kitty you have one too, but Dotty Dimple, you're not in it this time.

Mab—[Reads letter hurriedly, jumps up and in a tragic voice exclaims.] Am I dreaming? Shake me girls. Listen to this. Mrs. Goldrocks, who expects to open her fine new house next Thursday, by giving a musicale, has written to know if I will favor them with a reading or two during the evening.

Kit—[Who has been reading her letter jumps up shouting.] Hurrah! You're not the only one in the swim, Queen Mab. My last story has actually been accepted! Just think of it! And look at this will you? A check! [Waves check over her head, and catching Mab about the waist, whirls around the room with her.]

Joyce—Pause fair maiden, in your mad career, long enough to let my gaze rest on that check for one brief moment. It's been ages since I beheld the like.

Kit—[Starting for door.] Haven't the brief moment to spare Joyce! my dear, for this means that we can have a good square meal once more, and I mean to order such a dinner as befits the occasion. We'll have roast beef, potatoes, a salad course, and—[Goes out of door.]

Mab—[Runs after her calling.] Don't forget olives and pickles.

Dot—Yes, and can't we have bananas and oranges?

Joyce—What's the matter with cream puffs, and icecream and cake?

[While girls are calling after Kit, the curtain falls.]

ACT SECOND.

[Curtain rises with Dot, Joyce and Mab present. Knock is heard. Joyce may be sitting at easel painting.]

Mab—There that must be Polly's caller. [She goes to the door and admits a dapper young man.] Do you wish to see Miss Perkins? She is not in.

Mr. Flitz—Well, I don't know that I'm pining to see Miss Perkins. Your fair self will do as well.

Mab—Sir! [aside] Constancy thy name is man!

Mr. F.—This is a beautiful morning after all. I really thought we were going to have rain again. We have had a great deal of bad weather lately.

Mab—Yes, but it is lovely today. Do you stay in town long?

Mr. F.—Well, I expect to be here a few days. This is Miss Kimberlin, I believe. Your literary fame, your taste for literature, and your appreciation of good books, have led me to call, to get your indorsement of a work I am in-

roducing. [Produces book.]

Mab—Oh, you have made a mistake. I am not Miss Kimberlin. She is not here at present.

Mr. F—Well I'm sure you look as if you had a taste for literature, and I know you will be interested in this work. Miss—

Mab—Mrs. Jones, Mrs. John Jones. I wish Mr. Jones were here, for he has a consuming taste for literature. He buys all the books for the children and me. [Dot and Joyce convulsed with laughter.]

Mr. F—You have children, then?

Mab—I have four.

Mr. F—Then, lady, you positively can not afford to be without this book. If Mr. Jones is not here that need make no difference. It is the ladies of the house I wish to see. I am a great friend of the ladies. You will want this book, I know, for you can not make me believe you are not literary.

Mab—Oh yes, I love books. Why I have read all of The Duchess' works, and I dote on Mary J. Holmes. Aren't her books splendid? [Dot rushes out of room stuffing handkerchief in mouth.]

Mr. F—Yes, lady, but these are works of fiction. The work I am introducing, deals with facts throughout the world, and with problems—

Mab—Oh then it would be no good to me. I never could do arithmetic. That lady there [pointing to Joyce] is a mathematician.

Mr. F—Turning to Joyce. Then you will be interested in this work too. [Turning again to Mab.] But you do not quite understand yet, it deals with social—

Mab—Oh how nice! We have lots of sociables in this neighborhood, and are nearly at the end of our string for something to do. Does it give new games?

Mr. F—Lady, you still do not comprehend. It deals with facts, social, economic—

Mab—I have enough economy in mine already, thank you—an elegant sufficiency.

Mr. F—Still you fail to understand. If you will only listen, I will explain

Mab—I wish you would. I would love to have you explain. Girls, the gentleman will explain. Why where is Dot? [Joyce starts to leave room.] Joyce don't you want to hear him explain?

Joyce—I will be back.

Mr. F—[As if saying his piece.] This work I am introducing is a library of universal and all-embracing information; a compendium of events, figures, and statistics; a compilation of facts in science, art, literature, history, religion, medicine, surgery, etiquette, hypnotism, palmistry, legerdemain, chiropody and osteopathy. From it, you may learn German, French, architecture, shorthand, drafting, civil engineering, in three weeks, without a teacher. It is a dictionary, a cyclopaedia, a liberal education—a whole library in one volume, right at your hand. No household should be without it.

Mab—How perfectly delightful! I would dearly love to have it, so I could improve my mind.

Mr. F—Your children too, ought to have its benefits. You will do a grave wrong, lady, if you deprive them of this book.

Mab—Yes, no doubt the children will cry for it. [Dot and Joyce peep out at intervals, but retire when Mab's speeches are too much for their gravity.]

Mr. F—[It is a book that will be an ornament to your parlor table. It is illustrated in twenty colors, and contains one hundred half-tone engravings. You can take it up at odd times, and thus gain valuable knowledge; you can offer it to your guests, and let them have the boon or receiving information from this great work.]

Mab—How I would like to offer it to my friends. They would be so complimented.

Mr. F—Just think of it lady. [Turns leaves.] Here you find a cure for warts, here it tells how to make a divan with a goods box and a bit of chintz. Here you learn how to pull teeth at home without pain; here is a chapter on the care of infants; here are directions for a hair cut at home, the art of sharpening a razor; then we have a table showing woman's chances for marrying—in short, you can get information on any subject. I will put your name down—

Mab—No, no you must not, though I would love to have it.

Mr. F—[Talking very fast.] I can furnish it in calf for six dollars, half morocco four dollars, gilt top, rough edged leaves, and for two dollars and a half, I can furnish this style in cloth.

Mab—But I haven't the money today.

Mr. F—That makes no difference. You need not pay till we deliver in

two weeks.

Mab—I will not have the money then either.

Mr. F.—That is all right. You can pay on the installment plan, one dollar a month, and never miss it. So I will put your name down—

Mab—Oh no, I can not take it. I—I must consult Mr. Jones. I never do any thing without his consent. You must excuse me, for I can not give you any more of my time.

Mr. F.—[Putting away prospectus.] As I do not want you to be deprived of this priceless work, I will do myself the honor of calling when Mr. Jones returns. [Exit.]

[Joyce and Dot and Kit appear laughing and clapping hands.]

Dot—Well, Mrs. Jones, you're in a nice mess, aren't you?

Joyce—Says he'll call again. Serves you right for taking in that innocent and guileless youth.

Dot—Thought I'd explode. Wonder if he heard us giggling?

Joyce—I've got it in for you old girl, trying to get me cornered in there to hear that lingo.

Kit—Coming again too. Nice prospect!

Mab—if he comes again girls, you'll have to take him off my hands.

Joyce—Well, the sublime nerve of that!

Dot—It's your own funeral. It's up to you.

Joyce—Have Mr. Jones and the children receive him.

Dot—Yes, the precious darlings must not be deprived of that famous work.

[Knock at door is heard.]

Kit—I think this must really be Polly's caller. I'll freeze him all right.

[Opens door to Polly's real accepted lover, Rodney Morris, who has come to the city to take her by surprise.] [Exit other girls.]

Mr. M.—Good morning. I am Mr. Morris. I find that I have no cards with me. Is Miss Perkins in?

Kit—[Thinking the caller is the one Polly expects.] I am Miss Kimberlin. No, Mr. Morris, she is not.

Mr. M.—Can you tell when she will be home? I am very anxious to see her.

Kit—No, I can not. She did not say, and when she goes into the city, it is most uncertain when she will return

[Janitor rushes in.]

Janitor—Where is he? Where is the varmint? The likes of a book agent comin' into respectable flats! [Taking Mr. Morris by the collar, to put him out.] Couldn't ye rade the sign, ye spalpeen?

Kit—Dennis! Dennis, you're mistaken.

Janitor—Don't be afther tellin' me. I know 'em.

Kit—Stop, Dennis, stop.

Janitor—He must have got apast me whin I was in the basement. Didn't ye see the sign? Can't ye rade?

Kit—Dennis don't! Stop this instant! Don't you hear me? He's not a book agent. Stop, I say.

Janitor—[Relaxing hold of Mr. M.—] They tould me there was one in the flat.

Kit—But he's not the book agent. This is a caller for Miss Perkins. The book agent has gone.

Janitor—Huh! gone has he? Which way? I'll find him yit. [Rushes out.]

Kit—Oh, Mr. Morris, I am mortified to death by this mistake. It is too dreadful. Can you ever pardon the blunder?

Mr. M.—You could not help it. You are not to blame.

Kit—It is just too abominable to have you treated so, when you came a stranger.

Mr. M.—I trust it was, because I was a stranger.

Kit—Well rather! We are not in the habit of treating our callers in that way. [As he turns to go.] Do not go yet.

Mr. M.—As Miss Perkins is not here, I think I must go.

Kit—But you will come again? I—er—I do not know when Miss Perkins will be back, but do come, and I beg a thousand pardons.

Mr. M.—Don't mention it. Thank you, I'll call again at one this afternoon. [Exit.]

Kit—There! I've been and gone and done it, but I just couldn't do any thing else, even for Polly.

Joyce—[Entering from bedroom] Of course you couldn't. So don't worry.

[Dot and Mab enter from kitchen.]

Kit—Was there ever anything so awkward? That idiot of a janitor! I thought I'd die of mortification, and yet I could hardly keep from laughing.

Joyce—it was perfectly killing!

Kit—What will he think of us?

Mab—Well, mistakes will happen in the best of families.

Dot—Mab didn't I hear you declaiming to the four walls awhile ago?

Joyce—Yes, you'll find us more responsive than the walls.

Mab—Well, I really ought to be getting in trim, but hate to be an in-fiction on you long-suffering girls.

Dot—The idea! If you are going to talk like that, you won't catch me singing any more.

Joyce—Well I should say! As if we don't enjoy hearing you both. Now stop your nonsense Mab, and get to work.

Kit—A select and appreciative audience is before you.

Joyce—We'll criticize and express ourselves, as you go along.

Dot—Yes, we'll be a whole school of expression.

Mab—Well, here goes. [Stands up.] I am going to give ———

[A serious selection.]

Joyce—That's good. You're just fine in that.

Kit—Use your diaphragm my dear Miss. [Mimics man teacher.]

Mab—That's Prof. Flood, for all the world!

Dot—Breathe deeply. Expand the back.

Joyce—Remember the light, conversational tone.

Kit—Let the body respond!

Mab—[Laughing.] You girls'll be the death of me yet.

Dot—Got the Shakespearian method of breathing down fine?

Joyce—Girls we must behave ourselves. We're horrid wretches to carry on so.

[Mab begins to straighten up, and prepares to speak.]

Kit—Get the emotion! [Mab laughs and gets decomposed.]

Dot—Let go now, let go!

Joyce—Yes, let her go!

[Mab finally composes herself, recites a serious selection, heavy and tragic, if desired. When through all clap.]

Kit—That was really fine.

Dot—We're no end proud of our Queen Mab.

Joyce—You're just superb, when you get that majestic mien.

Kit—Hope the people at Mrs. Goldrocks' "function", as she calls it, will have sense enough to appreciate it.

Joyce—But we must keep still, and let Mab do her next stunt.

Dot—Yes, for you'll be sure to get an encore, so give 'em one of your funny ones. Oh, read ——— that's killing!

Mab—I'd thought of that. Any more suggestions, for the good of the order?

Kit—I believe that's your best.

Mab I believe it is, so I'll settle on that. [Recites humorous selection.

When she is through all laugh and clap, when Polly enters.]

[Enter Polly from street.]

Kit—[Dancing around, and waving hands in great excitement.] Don't come in, don't, don't for your life, for it's nearly one o'clock, and he'll be here any minute.

Polly—Has the child gone crazy?

Kit—No, but your caller—the one you didn't want to see. He's been here, and is coming again. Go quick! Run to the Deerings' or somewhere, and don't show your face again till bedtime. [Pushes her towards door.]

Polly—Don't be in such a rush. I'll go.

Joyce—But you're so poky. Hurry, if you mean to escape him.

Kit—Go down the back stairs, and out the area way. Run for your life! [Exit Polly.]

Joyce—Well, she did "get a move on," finally.

Kit—Yes, and I trust she's safe, but I don't see the reason for all the excitement. He's swell looking, and you wouldn't catch me giving him the icy mit.

Joyce—Nor me. I took a peep at him. He's perfectly elegant! [Knock is heard.] There he is this minute. We'll make ourselves scarce. [Exit Joyce and Dot.]

[Kit goes to door and admits Mr. Morris, who looks around and does not see Polly.]

Mr. M.—Miss Perkins not in yet?

Kit—No, Mr. Morris, she is not. How vexed you must be. She surely has gone to see some friends.

Mr. M.—Is she often gone so long?

Kit—No—y-e-s, she goes away and stays for hours. There's no telling about her movements.

Mr. M.—How strange! That isn't like her at all. Can you account for it?

Kit—N-o, y-e-s, I don't know what I'm saying.

Mr. M.—What do you mean, Miss Kimberlin? From your manner I am forced to think there is something on her mind.

Kit—Oh no, it's nothing. Nothing to speak of.

Mr. M.—Miss Kimberlin, I am a tried friend of Miss Perkins, and you need not fear to trust me. If she's in any trouble here among strangers, I ought to know it.

Kit—Oh, it's nothing but a bad case of heart affection.

Mr. M.—[Starting.] You mean she's in love? This concerns me deeply—

Kit—But it's not you, you know. There's some one else. [Aside.] Dear

me what am I saying?

Mr. M.—Not I? Indeed! [He turns and walks away.] What can it mean? And we were to have been married. Can it be that she has become interested in some one else and has been deceiving me all this time, and I like a fool believed in her? Instead of writing I came and thought to take her by surprise—a sorry surprise, indeed. [Turning to Dot and advancing toward her.] I have no right to ask you more, Miss Dean. I will go now but will come back this evening, for I must know from Miss Perkins' own lips what this means. [Exit Mr. Morris.]

Kit—Don't go. What have I done? [Wrings hands.] I wish I could learn to keep my mouth shut. But I don't care. He ought to know, but a pretty mess I've made of it.

[Enter Joyce, Dot and Mab.]

Mab—What's that you've been making a mess of?

Kit—Didn't you hear what I said to that poor young man?

Joyce—Not a word. So out with it. What's your very latest?

Kit—Well, I might as well confess. Girls, I've done the awfullest thing. I've told Mr. Morris, that he's not the one for Polly. That there's another.

Dot—You did?

Mab—Well, that's the best ever!

Joyce—You did hand him the icy mit, with a vengeance. What did he say?

Kit—He seemed awfully cut up. I blurted it out, before I knew what I was saying, and—but any way, he ought to know.

Dot—Yes, but as for telling him—excuse me. But here comes Marno.

[Enter Marno.]

Joyce—Well look at her, I know she's had good luck this time.

Mab—Just I should say! Her face is fairly shining. I'll bet she's succeeded today.

Marno—No, I didn't. Same old story. Every place filled. Work a little slack right now, but if I would leave my name and address, etc.—

Joyce—Never mind child, let me get you something to eat, for you must be as hungry as a bear.

Marno—No I'm not. I lunched down town.

Joyce—You lunched down town!

Marno—Yes, at the Annex.

Joyce—At the Annex! Has the child gone mad?

Marno—[Laughing.] Well not exactly Joyce. But girls, just guess whom I met down town.

Kit—Judging from your looks, I will say your fairy godmother.

Dot—Man, woman or child? Come tell us quick. I'm dying to know.

Marno—Fred Albright.

Kit—What!

Dot—Give us something easy.

Mab—Honest now, you didn't.

Kit—You can't fool us that way.

Joyce—Fred Albright—why, I thought he was in Europe.

Marno—He is—I mean he was, but he's back.

Dot—Well, that accounts for your lunch at the Annex too.

Mab—But of course you didn't speak to him?

Marno—[Defiantly.] But of course I did. Couldn't help myself.

Mab—Oh, the consistency of the "female sect". Why it hasn't been two weeks, since I heard a certain young lady of my acquaintance vow, that she never would speak to that fellow again, never.

Kit—Come Mab, stop teasing her, and let her tell her story. [All gather round.]

Marno—Why there isn't much to tell.

Dot—Oh pshaw! We know better than that. Come now hurry a little.

Kit—Did you kiss and make up?

Marno—Yes, we did.

Mab—Oh, you did, did you? Right there on the street?

Marno—No, you goose, of course not, but our misunderstanding was the most foolish thing. It was too absurd!

Kit—I always told you that you made a mountain out of a molehill. But begin at the beginning. When did you meet him? How did you meet him? Where did you meet him? What did he say? What did you say? Did he clasp you in his loving embrace right then and there?

Marno—Now Kit, don't be silly. Why you see, I was in the middle of the block before I saw him, and I didn't know what under the sun to do; for I couldn't turn around and go back, so I put on a bold front and was going to pass him as if I didn't see him, but when we met, he said "Good morning Marno," in the most matter of fact tone, so what could I do?

Dot—Sure enough! Of course you could do nothing but fall on his neck, and weep barrels of tears, [aside] Amanda, in Children of the Abbey, and exclaim "My own has returned to me once more" and etcetera.

Marno—That sounds like me, doesn't it? What I did, was to say in frigid tones "Good morning Mr. Albright".

Joyce—Oh Marno, how could you?

Marno—Then he turned square around, saying "I am so glad we are going in the same direction, for I want to have a talk with you, and-and-well everything was explained, and to make a long story short, we are going to be married in two days.

Dot—Married!

Joyce—The idea!

Kit—In two days?

Mab—[Gasping.] You fairly take my breath.

Joyce—Why this unseemly haste, fair maiden?

Marno—Well, I have no father and mother, that we have to get their consent and Fred said he wasn't going to run any more risks, and—a lot more foolish things that wouldn't interest you—and then he has to return to Europe at once, and will not go without me.

Mab—See here my dear, it isn't fair to leave out those interesting parts. How am I to know when foolish things are said to me, if I don't know some of them?

Joyce—I'll risk you knowing them all right enough.

Mab—Not I, my girl. Why the nearest the real thing I ever came, was when Mr. Story said "Miss Maitland, if you are not engaged, I would like to propose—going to the opera".

Kit—Never mind, old girl, your time'll come.

Mab—Would that I could think so.

Marno—How I wish you were all as happy as I am. Did I tell you that we are going to the parsonage and be quietly married?

Joyce—Well I guess not. You are going to be married right here—in this very room. The idea, of thinking of anything else.

Marno—You know I can't afford a wedding, and then my suit looks too shabby for—

Kit—Marno Merrill, you don't mean to say you are going to be married in that old gray suit of yours? I say, perish the thought! My last summer's white dress isn't bad, and with new laces and ribbon to freshen it up, will do, and that is to be your wedding dress.

Marno—It's lovely of you, Kit dear, to offer it, but do you think I'll accept your only white dress?

Kit—Of course. It's a pity I can't have my way, and contribute something to the first wedding among the "saucy six." You will have to defer to your elders, my child.

Marno—Yes, my elder, by four whole days.

Dot—I'm going to send to Dad and ask for a check for twenty-five dollars. Marno—Dorothy Dean, you'll do no such thing. Here we've been on the verge of starvation, and you were too proud to let your family know and now—

Dot—Oh well, this is very different. I'll tell him a friend is going to be married, and I want to make her a present. See?

Mab—I've worn my new long kid gloves only once, and you shall have them.

Joyce—Yes, and you may carry my point lace handkerchief that was my

grandmother's.

"Something old and something new;

Something borrowed and something blue."

Marno—[With handkerchief to eyes.] Girls, you are too good. I never can thank you—I—I—

Joyce—Kit, hand me that geranium from the stand will you?

Kit—What under the sun do you want with that?

Joyce—Why I forgot to water it this morning, and thought Marno's tears might make it grow.

Dot—Joyce Jocelyn, I believe you would jest if you were dying—

Joyce—Don't know about that, never having been there, but am not sure but one might "jest" as well—

Dot—A pun; a pun; put her out. [All take hold of her, push her to the door and as they try to get her out of the door it opens, and Joyce is pushed against a young man who is about to enter. Young man's hat is knocked off. Other girls run back, leaving Joyce to make her peace with the stranger.]

Joyce—[In great confusion.] Oh, I beg your pardon, I—I—

Mr. Dare—It's all right, no harm done I assure you. I have a sister, Mrs. Harding, somewhere in this flat, and I thought this was her number.

Joyce—Oh yes, you're looking for the stop your sister flats in—I mean you're looking for the stopper—no the flatter—oh, I don't know what I mean.

Mr. D.—[Trying to conceal a smile.] Never mind, I'll find her.

Marno—[Taking pity on Joyce comes forward.] Beg pardon, but did you say you are looking for Mrs. Harding?

Mr. D.—Yes, but it seems I've made a mistake.

Marno—Her flat is on the floor below, to the right.

Mr. D.—Thank you. [Turns away, and girls come to the front.]

Kit—Did you say he was looking for the stop his sister flats in?

Joyce—Don't Kit. Wasn't it awful? But did you see the horrid fellow laugh? I'll get even with him, if it takes me the rest of my life.

Mab—You made a decided hit, I'm thinking.

Kit—"She fell into my arms, the insensible thing, and said she'd no notion of men."

[Quick curtain, as Joyce starts towards Mab.]

ACT THIRD.

Curtain rises showing all the girls present but Polly.

Dot—[At piano.] Oh girls, I nearly forgot to tell you I saw Cholly Chumleigh down town. Cholly "don't you know", and he insisted on calling this evening. I just couldn't get rid of him.

Joyce—It'll be worth the price of admission to see his face when he finds Fred Albright on the scene.

Dot—I felt tempted to tell him, but of course I didn't.

Mab—[Goes to Marno and bows.] My deah Miss Mawno, may I have the pleasha, Miss Mawno?

Kit—He'll not have the "pleasha of Miss Mawno", very long. I suppose the other rejected lover will be coming once more, to see Polly of the Marble Heart. Girls, he's perfectly elegant. I don't see why in the world Polly wants to turn him down.

Joyce—Nor I. He's just swell. I had a glimpse of him the first time he called.

Kit—You wouldn't catch me turning him down. But it's all up with my prospects. The very sight of me will be painful to him. But you other girls, you'd better sit up and take notice. You may be able to mend his broken heart.

Mab—I don't suppose he'll come again, so we'll not get a chance.

Kit—Yes he will. He's determined to hear his doom from Polly's own lips, so she has only put off the evil day.

Joyce—I tell you it is real affecting.

Dot—It surely is.

Joyce—Well, it is.

Dot—I didn't say it wasn't

[Knock at door.]

Kit—There he is now. I'm going to vamoose.

Joyce—Stay and introduce us, any way, there's a dear.

Mab—Do, Kit.

Kit—[From bedroom.] I won't, not on your life I won't. I'm here, and here I'm going to stay.

Joyce—What will he think of us? Keep quiet girls. [Opens door and admits Mr. Morris.]

Joyce—This is Mr. Morris I presume. Come in. I am Miss Jocelyn. This is Miss Maitland, Miss Merrill and Miss Dean. Mr. Morris, girls.

Mr. M—[Looking around room.] Miss Perkins still not in?

Joyce—No, she is not. How disgusted you must be. But be seated. She is likely to return soon.

Mr. M—Thank you, I will wait a short time.

Mab—How are you enjoying the city?

Mr. M—[Rather sarcastically.] Immensely.

Marno—We are having quite cool weather.

Joyce—It is generally warm by this time. Our city seems to be trying to show how cool it can be.

Mr. M—It seems so. Decidedly frigid, in fact.

Dot—[After awkward pause.] Have you been to grand opera?

Mr. M—No, Miss Dean, I got in only this morning.

Joyce—You must surely go while you are here.

Mr. M—I am leaving tomorrow.

Marno—So soon! You have had no chance to see the sights.

Mr. M—I am not here sight-seeing. I am obliged to go, as business calls me.

Dot—I fear you have not been favorably impressed with our city.

Mr. M—The city is all right. [Rising.] I will be going now. Tell Miss Perkins please, that a business engagement calls me out of the city, but I will return day after tomorrow, and will ask her to see me at four o'clock that afternoon.

Joyce—We will surely tell her.

Mr. M—Good evening ladies. [Exit.]

Mab—Well, Polly has escaped again. I expected her to pop in any minute

Joyce—She's in for it though day after tomorrow, all right.

Dot—Isn't he handsome, girls?

Joyce—Polly's an ungrateful wretch, not to appreciate him.

Polly—[Entering.] What's that you're saying about me?

Joyce—Your caller was here the third time, and had to go without seeing you.

Polly—That's lucky.

Mab—But your day of reckoning is coming. He left word he would call day after tomorrow at four o'clock.

Polly—[Groaning.] Oh dear!

Kit—[Coming from bedroom] I may as well confess. I've made it easy sailing for you. I've told him he's not the right one.

Polly—What!

Kit—Yes sir, and I made a pretty mess of it too. But it'll be easier for you. I've brought matters to a focus.

Polly—Well, I suppose it's just as well. I'd have to face it some time, and may as well get it over.

Dot—Well girls, I ought to warble a few warbles, to get ready for tomorrow. Tomorrow is the fateful day.

Polly—What is your professor like any way?

Joyce—Is his hair long?

Kit—Is he grim and grouchy?

Marno—Were you scared stiff?

Mab—Didn't you tremble in your boots, before his high mightiness?

Polly—Is he fat and baldheaded, or withered and dried up?

Dot—[Laughing.] You're all off. Why girls he's young and handsome.

Kit—Gracious! I s'posed he was as old as Methuseleh.

Mab—I did too, with his many medals and his honors.

Dot—When I went in, a dapper youth came to meet me, and thinking of course it was one of his pupils, I asked for Professor Tryvoisky, and you can imagine my surprise, when he made a profound bow, and said "He ees before you Mees". Why I nearly fell over dead.

Polly—What did y'-u do? Young and dapper, the idea!

Dot—I managed to pull myself together enough to hand him Professor Master's letter. When he read it he said "Any pupeel of Professair Masters, will haf my vary most heartfelt attention."

Joyce—Decidedly fervent!

Dot—I wish you could have seen the elaborate bow he made when he said, "I weel next day, the plaiasure haf of leestening to Mees Dean's voice". So that means I must get to work.

Kit—Yes, Dotty Dimple, here's the chance of your life.

Joyce—Even his high mightiness will have to acknowledge that your

voice is not ordinary.

Dot—[With hand on heart.] "You flatter me Mees". He asked me if I sing _____ and _____ [Supply two songs, one sacred, and one not sacred, both by great composers if desired.] I told him that I do, and I am to sing them for him tomorrow.

Mab—You sing them well too. How lucky!

Dot—I've no idea, I will do my best, tomorrow.

Polly—Oh, now, don't you think it for a minute.

Joyce—One consolation, he's a master, and can tell the quality of your voice, even if you don't do your best.

Kit—Yes, I'd rather trust him, than one of your smarties, who knows so little, he thinks he knows it all.

Dot—You're comforting, I'm sure.

Marno—Well, begin, and let's hear the songs.

Dot—Come on Polly. [Polly goes to piano, playing accompaniment for Dot, while Dot sings.]

[All applaud.]

Joyce—Fine!

Kit—You never sang better.

Dot—If I only can do that well tomorrow.

Mab—Oh, you will.

Polly—Come on, Dot, sing the other one. [Just as she finishes, and while they applaud, a knock is heard. Kit goes to door and admits Fred Albright.]

Kit—Why how do you do, Fred Albright?

Fred—How are you, Miss Kitty? Here you all are.

Mab—Yes, the "saucy six" are all here, and how do you find yourself, Mr. Albright?

Fred—[Shakes hands with all.] Fine and dandy. Never better.

Joyce—You're looking fine. A sea voyage seems to agree with you.

Dot—Something evidently agrees with him.

Kit—It's a certain young lady, I'm a thinking.

Polly—But she once disagreed with him, decidedly.

Marno—Now girls, you're too mean.

Joyce—[To Fred.] I suppose you expect us to tell you we're glad to see you.

Kit—I'm not sure we are.

Dot—You swoop down here, and whirl our Marno off, without so much as saying "by your leave".

Fred—It's by her leave, I reckon. [Looking at Marno.]

Mab—Well, my children, I suppose we'll have to give you our blessing.

[Knock at door. Kit admits Mrs. Harding and brother, Mr. Dare.]

Kit—How do you do, Mrs. Harding, come in.

Mrs. H—Miss Kimberlin, this is my brother, Mr. Dare. I want you all to meet him. Miss Dean, Miss Mattland, Miss Merrill, Miss Perkins, Miss Jocelyn, my brother. Well, of all things, if here isn't Mr. Albright. Where did you drop from?

Fred—Oh, I just got back from Europe.

Mrs. H—I'm glad to see you home again.

Fred—Thank you.

Mrs. H—Oh, excuse me. Mr. Albright this is my brother, Mr. Dare. [Men shake hands.]

Kit—I believe we have met Mr. Dare before.

Mr. D—Yes, I made a stupid blunder, and invaded your premises, so thought I'd better come and be presented in due form.

Marno—We are glad to know Mrs. Harding's brother, I'm sure. She is one of our good friends.

Dot—Yes indeed, any of Mrs. Harding's friends are welcome.

Mrs. H—Robert told me of his adventure here, and was glad to find that I knew you all. [Turning to Mr. Albright.] Are you going to stay on this side now, Mr. Albright?

Fred—No, I'm off again very soon.

Mrs. H—But I thought you and Marno—oh! [They gather nearer, and while the other girls and Fred and Mrs. H—talk and explain about the wedding, in an undertone, Mr. Dare makes his way to Joyce, who is well to front of stage.]

Mr. D—I made up my mind I wanted to know more of these fair dwellers in flats.

Joyce—That's a nice way of calling us flat girls.

Mr. D—Flat! Indeed you're not. You're sharp as—tacks.

Joyce—Very pointed, I'm sure, but we'd still be flat as to our heads.

Mr. D.—Then you're spicy and sweet as a carnation.

Joyce—Now you've become a flatterer.

Mr. D.—How can I help it in such an atmosphere?

Joyce—You will make flat remarks.

Mr. D.—Can't I make my peace with you in some way?

Joyce—I'm not quarrelling.

Mr. D.—Aren't you going to forgive me for running against me?

Joyce—I could forgive your—no my running against you, but—

Mr. D.—But what? I seem to be up against it now. What is my heinous crime?

Joyce—You ought to know what you did.

Mr. D.—What could I do at the sight of a young lady, in most charming confusion, but—

Joyce—There you've said quite enough.

[Knock at door.]

Mr. D.—Won't you ever forgive me? How long must we be at odds?

Joyce—[Just before Mab admits Cholly Chumleigh.] Until we get even.

Mab—Good evening, Mr. Chumleigh, come in.

Cholly—Weally now, good evening Miss Mabel, is Miss Mawno in?

Kit—Yes, Mr. Chumleigh.

Cholly—Thought I'd call, you know. Weally now, you have quite a pawty, don't you know.

Kit—Just a few friends happened in.

Cholly—[Catching sight of Marno.] Yes, theah's Miss Mawno ovaw theah.

Mab—Mr. Chumleigh, meet Mr. Dare.

Cholly—Chawmed, I'm suah. Weally if heah isn't Mrs. Hawding too.

Mrs. H.—How are you Mr. Chumleigh? [Cholly greets others and makes his way to Marno.]

Cholly—My deah Miss Mawno, how chawmed I am to see you, don't you know.

Marno—Thank you, Mr. Chumleigh.

Cholly—By Jove! You heah Albwright? Well I am su'pvised, I weally am. [As they shake hands.] Thought you weah on the othah side, don't you know.

Fred—I was, but I'm here now.

Cholly—You don't say. I am su'pvised, I weally am, you know.

Marno—Mr. Albright surprised us all.

Cholly—It gave me quite a shock, to see Albwright, you know. It weally did.

Mab—That is a shame. I trust it will not injure your nervous system.

Cholly—Weally, now, Miss Mabel, that's kind of you.

Marno—Was it raining, Mr. Chumleigh, when you came in?

Cholly—No, Miss Mawno. Oh, Miss Mawno, I weally had an adventuah on my way heah. I weally did.

Marno—Tell us about it.

Cholly—Well, I was on State stweet, don't you know. It was crowsded as usual, and a gimmy wo'king man jostled wright against me. He soiled my glove, and weally, he vewy neahly, but not quite, knocked off my hat.

Kit—The very ideal! And what did you do?

Cholly—I called him a howwid fellow, in my ste'nest tone, I weally did, and I told him he was vewy wude indeed; that the police ought to make an example of him. I weally told him that vewy thing.

Mab—Did you really, Mr. Chumleigh?

Cholly—Those weah my exact wo'ds, Miss Mabel, they weally weah.

Polly—You have been standing all this time, Mr. Chumleigh, won't you have a chair?

Cholly—I can not tawvy long, Miss Polly, I weally can't, I have an engagement with Miss Melwose, the heivess, don't you know.

[He sits on a chair, which though cushioned, has no bottom, and he goes through. All laugh, but of course Cholly does not see them, and Fred and Mr. Dare go to the rescue.]

[These exclamations should be said nearly all at the same time.]

Dare—Decided slump in calves.

Mab—[Aside.] Clever chair that.

Fred—[Aside.] It knows a soft thing.

Joyce—[Aside.] He's all in, "don't you know."

Cholly—[As Fred and Mr. Dare try to help him.] This is deucedly awkward, don't you know.

[CURTAIN.]

ACT IV.

[Curtain rises, showing same room, with Polly, Mab, Kit, Joyce, Fred

Albright, Mr. Dare and Mrs. Harding, decorating the room for the wedding. There are two step ladders, evergreen, or other kind of green, flowers natural or artificial, if obtainable. Have plenty of green which some can be making into rope, while Mr. Dare and Fred Albright are mounted on ladders tacking up rope. As much or as little decorating as desired, may be done. Kit and Mab helping Fred while Joyce directs Mr. Dare.] Time is flying.

Mab—We'll have to be getting this done. I wonder how Dot is getting along dressing the bride.

Kit—It is sure. I wonder how Dot is getting along dressing the bride. Joyce—[As Mr. D. holds festoon ready to tack.] There Mrs. Hardings, how does that look?

Mrs. H.—That's all right. It looks fine.

Fred—[Pounding vigorously, gives finger a blow.] Julius Caesar's ghost! Girls in chorus—Oh, Mr. Albright! [Ladder sways, the girls steady it, and Mr. Dare comes to the rescue.]

Mr. D.—Don't go to using language now. Look pleasant old man, look pleasant.

Fred—[Nursing finger.] I feel pleasant.

Kit—I'll go and get the arnica. [Exit.]

Fred—Oh never mind, it's nothing. [Sitting on the ladder.]

Mab—You ought to have it doctored. You must have it looked after.

Fred—[As Kit returns with bottle and bandage.] Now, Miss Kitty, there's no need.

Kit—Fred Albright, you come down from your perch this minute, and let me bandage that finger.

Mr. D.—No use Albright. May as well give in first as last.

Fred—[Comes down and Kit wraps up finger.] I'll smell like a 'pothe-cary shop, or a battered foot-ball player.

Mr. D.—Never mind. Take your medicine like a man.

Joyce—I 'spect we'll have to postpone the wedding.

Polly—Yes, he can't give his hand in marriage, swathed in bandages and arnica.

Fred—Oh, you girls! But this is much ado about nothing.

Mr. D.—I guess he'll survive, so we must get to work again.

Mab—[As Mr. Dare and Fred mount ladders.] Why Fred, you can't work with that hand.

Fred—See if I don't.

Mr. D.—[To Joyce standing below him.] You have to look up to me, at last.

Joyce—I might look the other way, but I won't, we have to get this work done.

Mr. D.—Why spoil it? When you smile on me, I am up in the seventh heaven.

Joyce—You may have a fall.

Mr. D.—There is danger of my losing my head.

Joyce—Yes, the ladder might fall.

Mr. D.—Then I would fall at your feet.

Joyce—We must stop talking nonsense and go on with our work.

[Knock at door, which Polly opens.]

Janitor—Shure, Miss, here's some bundles that was left.

Polly—[Taking packages.] Oh girls, more presents.

Mab—I do wonder what they are.

Polly—[Going to bedroom.] Marno, Marno, here are more packages.

Joyce—Wouldn't mind getting married myself.

Mr. D.—"Barcus is willin'." [Joyce tosses her head, gives him a look, but makes no reply.]

Janitor—Faith, if thim errunt b'ys, the varmint, hain't been comin' the whole blessed marnin'.

Kit—Did you bring all the packages up?

Janitor—Indade an' I did Miss, but the toime I had with them b'ys. I'd no sooner git one 'round to the a'ry way, till another'd be at the front intrance an' I'd have to tell him he'd missed the wrong place. I belave they done it a purpose.

Kit—I've no doubt it was provoking.

Janitor—[Looking round room.] But what's a goin' on here?

Joyce—We're going to have a wedding, Dennis.

Janitor—A weddin' is it? Faith Miss Joyce, an' it's yourself I'll be wishin' all kinds of good luck, and you, mister. [Turning to Mr. Dare] shure an' you're gittin' a moighty foine young leddy, you are so.

Mr. D.—Right you are, my man.

Joyce—Mercy! Dennis, it's not I. It's Miss Marno, who is to be married,

and [pointing to Fred] there's the happy man over there.
Janitor—Miss Marno! Well now you don't tell me. And that's her man?
Fred—I am proud to say I am.
Janitor—Shure an' you may be proud, for a swate little girl she is. But
I must be lookin' after thim b'ys, the spalpeens! [Exit.]
Mr. D—Dennis has great discrimination, and penetration.
Joyce—How so?
Mr. D—He discerns the fitness and appropriateness of—of things.
Joyce—What do you mean?
Mr. D—Why, in what he said just now.
Joyce—Dennis is an absurd old blunderer.
Mr. D—It was an awfully nice blunder.
Joyce—I hope it won't occur again.
Mr. D—I do too. I hope it won't be a blunder next time.
[Dot pushes Marno out in room, dressed for the wedding.]
Dot—There! Doesn't she look sweet? I just made her come out, for I
wanted you to see her Fred.
Fred—[Advancing toward Marno.] She's always sweet to me.
[Knock at door, which Kit opens, while Marno runs back to bedroom.
Rodney Morris enters.]
Kit—Good evening, come in.
Polly—[Looks up, drops every thing, and exclaims.] Why Rodney Mor-
ris! Did you drop down from heaven?
[Marno peeps out and gradually gets where she can hear.]
Mr. M—Well hardly, but I've found it about as hard to see you, as it
would be to get to heaven.
Polly—To see me! You? What do you mean?
Kit—Why, you know. Haven't I done my best to keep you apart? Isn't
this the caller that you didn't want to see?
Polly—Well, I rather guess not. This is Rodney Morris. [Turns to Rod-
ney.] So this is why you did not write?
Mr. M—I thought to take you by surprise, and a surprise it is—all around.
Joyce—Well I never!
Mab—Of all the blunders! [All show great interest and excitement.]
Kit—[To Rodney.] And I told you, you were not the one!
[They group themselves, Marno and Albright, Polly and Morris, Joyce
and Dare, Dennis and Cholly Chumleigh might thrust themselves in at the
last to complete the grouping.]

[CURTAIN.]

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